

BULLETIN
CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

FDCH 18-11

June 20, 2011

SUBJECT: Clarification on the Use of Offer versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service

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This policy bulletin is only for those institutions or facilities getting their meals from schools.

Institutions and facilities which receive their meals from schools participating on the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program may allow the use of offer versus serve only if it is used in the same manner as the school uses it, using the school's meal patterns. These institutions will generally be those operated by a school or has a contract (food service agreement) with a school for meals and is only for school age children. Offer versus serve (OVS) cannot be used with snacks as there are only two items.

OVS is not considered appropriate for preschool children and is not to be used with them. It may interfere with Program nutrition goals and the CACFP institution's efforts to introduce new foods to children.

Rather, we encourage CACFP institutions to consider using family style meal service, as described in FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 2, as a way to provide younger children some choice in the types and amounts of food selected.

When using family style the following guidelines must be used (FNS Instruction 783-9 rev 2):

- A sufficient amount of prepared food must be placed on each table to provide the full required portion of each of the food components for all children at the table.
- Children should initially be offered the full required portion of each meal component
- The supervising adult must actively encourage each child to accept the full component. If the child refuses the first time, then the supervising adult should offer it again.

If you have any questions about OVS, or want to implement OVS, please contact our office.

SP 35-2011, CACFP 23-2011